

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 HA-05 OMB-01 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 /068 W
-----002278 070801Z /17/46

O R 061840Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9425
INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TOKYO ADDED FOR INFO)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, GT
SUBJECT: ELECTION SITREP #1 (AS OF NOON, MARCH 6)

1. CHARGES OF IRREGULARITIES IN TRANSCRIBING AND REPORTING
ELECTION RETURNS FOR CITY OF GUATEMALA HAVE CAST INITIAL PALL
OVER ELECTION PROCESS. AS OF EARLY MORNING HOURS, MARCH 6,
ELECTORAL COUNCIL, RESPONDING TO DEMANDS OF MLN, CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATS AND SEVERAL OF THE GROUPS PARTICIPATING IN MAYORAL
RACE, ORDERED ELECTORAL REGISTRY TO SUSPEND ANNOUNCEMENT OF
PRELIMINARY ELECTION RESULTS. AT THAT POINT, OFFICIALLY
ANNOUNCED (BUT UNCERTIFIED, SINCE CERTIFICATION IS CONGRES-
SIONAL RESPONSIBILITY) TABULATION SHOWED FOLLOWING VOTE:

LUCAS (PR/PID/CAO) 18,063 (43.2 PERCENT)

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PERALTA AZURDIA (MLN) 13,469 (32.2 PERCENT)

PERALTA MENDEZ (DCG) 10,298 (24.6 PERCENT)

ABOVE FIGURES REPRESENT 178 POLLING PLACES OF TOTAL 571
IN CITY OF GUATEMALA. OFFICIAL FIGURES FOR AREAS OUTSIDE
OF GUATEMALA CITY HAD YET TO BE ANNOUNCED EXCEPT IN VERY

FRAGMENTARY FASHION. UNOFFICIAL TALLIES FROM POLITICAL PARTY SOURCES TENDED TO BE SELF-SERVING.

2. CALL FOR SUSPENSION OF PROCESSING OF RETURNS CAME AFTER SHARP SURGE WAS NOTED IN PR (MEMBER OF LUCAS COALITION) MAYORAL CANDIDATE'S SHARE OF GUATEMALA CITY VOTE. AT SAME TIME RETURNS SHOWED PARALLEL LUCAS SURGE OVERCOMING PERALTA AZURDIA'S COMMANDING EARLY LEAD. PERALTA MENDEZ LAGGED SUBSTANTIALLY IN BOTH EARLY AND LATER STAGES BEFORE SUSPENSION.

3. AT THIS WRITING NATIONAL ELECTORAL COUNCIL (ON WHICH ALL PARTIES REPRESENTED) HAS ORDERED MUNICIPAL ELECTORAL BOARD TO RESUME VOTE COUNT AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS. COUNCIL SAYS IT INTENDS TO LEAVE QUESTION OF CONTROVERSIAL VOTE SUMMARY SHEETS (PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES AGREE THAT A NUMBER WERE CRUDELY ALTERED) TO A SPECIAL COMMISSION. WE NOTE THAT ELECTORAL APPARATUS IN CITY OF GUATEMALA IS LARGELY UNDER CONTROL OF THE MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION, HEADED BY THE FUR, WHICH HAD CALLED FOR BOYCOTT OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

4. CONTROVERSY DEVELOPED AFTER A DAY OF SINGULARLY CALM AND ORDERLY POLLING. ONLY CRITICISM WAS REGARDING APPARENTLY MECHANICAL ERRORS IN SOME VOTER LISTS AND SOME CHARGES THAT SOME POLLS CLOSED ON SCHEDULE DESPITE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FACT VOTERS STILL REMAINED OUTSIDE. (POLLING PLACES ARE SUPPOSED TO ACCOMMODATE ANY WAITING VOTERS UNTIL MIDNIGHT IF NECESSARY, BUT IF THERE IS NO LINE AT 6 PM, THEY ARE REQUIRED TO CLOSE.) NO ONE HAS YET DISPUTED GENERALIZATION THAT VOTING PROCESS ITSELF TOOK PLACE, FOR MOST PART, SMOOTHLY AND CORRECTLY.

5. ALL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES ARE CLAIMING VICTORY ON BASIS OF PARTY TALLIES. PRESIDENTIAL LAUGERUD HAS NOT ISSUED ANY PUBLIC STATEMENT.

6. ELECTION OBSERVER TEAM (RICHARDSON, PLANCK AND ALBERS) MET WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD MORNING MARCH 5. THEY INDICATE TO US SATISFACTION WITH THAT MEETING AND WITH THEIR ACCESS TO ELECTORAL PROCESS. ALBERS HAS DEPARTED; RICHARDSON PLANS RETURN TO WASHINGTON MARCH 7; PLANCK, MARCH 8.
BOSTER

NOTE BY OC/T: EA DISTRIBUTION TAKE FOR FIRST TIME.

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Message Attributes

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